

# ENQUIRY

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## THE END OF THE NEW DEAL

The fiasco is now complete. The new Congress, organizing for its melancholy mission, stands as a symbol of the failure of the workingmen's organizations in America to crack the power of the ruling class. These bigoted delegates of organized reaction represent no sudden or unforewarned catastrophe. They summarize a trend long since begun, putting a definitive period to the New Deal era.

This process is reflected throughout the governmental structure. The end of WPA, the arrogant sabotage of FEPC, the imminent scuttling of FSA, the resignation of the government's consumer representatives, the unquestioned supremacy of big business, including the big farmers, in the war production program—all this is but the most recent manifestation of the basic fact. Its international counterpart is discerned in the spectacle of the King's First Minister hastening to assert his reactionary objectives at the first sight of military victory. The consolidation of capitalist power, at home and abroad, obviates the necessity for concessions. And those already given must be destroyed.

There is no denying that the New Deal introduced basic changes into American life. Rising in a period when the very existence of the capitalist order was at stake, it has operated as a stabilizing instrument, attempting to mediate fundamental class antagonisms. It was of the nature of this process that large concessions to the organized workers be made, that relief be doled out in quantities varying with the intensity of the struggle, that politicians from the liberal ranks be called to participate in the government. All this in the interests of Order. This development paralleled those operating in Europe, and in some countries, already brought to a close. Like its counterparts abroad, the New Deal confirmed the objective necessity for a positive intervention by government into economic affairs. Like the others, it guaranteed the continued dominance of the great corporate empires.

The labor and progressive movements embraced the new governmental enterprise, calling it their own. Money, first measured in bucketfuls, then in tin cups, gave them a role in administrative society. In return, they mortgaged their political lives. The irony of their situation—terribly grim in its consequences—was evident in this: that while they were convinced that theirs was the only practical way, they were forgetting the most elementary principles of political realism. Instead of making themselves indispensable to the regime, forcing ever greater concessions from it, and finally casting it aside when its period of usefulness was over, they completely reversed the situation—of their own free will! And today, the attempt to maintain the support of the rank and file and at the same time hold on to its waning privileges in Washington is racking the labor leadership. The problem is insoluble, for the administration has use for them only insofar as they have rank and file support, which is placed in continuous jeopardy by capitulation to the government's demands.

The New Deal experiment in class-collaborationist politics has failed. Many are already beginning to mourn its end. There are some of us who would like to be able to believe that, after evaluating the experience of the past decade, the labor leadership will change its tack. It is more than doubtful that this hope would be anything but vain. The stake of labor's ruling groups in the program they have espoused, both in terms of prestige and in the character of the personal organizations they have constructed, is far too great for that. For our part, we shall rest our hopes on the rumblings already being heard among the ranks and on the possibility of new regroupings in the days ahead. With the resurgence of militant progressive factions in Auto and elsewhere, go our hopes for a long-overdue policy of independent labor action.



# THE OBLIGATION OF SOCIAL ACTION

by Henry Ozanne

## I

The question of man's responsibility for "a world he never made" has provided a problem long characterizing western thought. The dilemma is this: In what significant sense is one accountable for a social fate that overmasters all one's attempts to shape and control it? How is it possible to posit an interdependent liability between man and society in the face of the glaring discontinuity between personal effort and social character?

This problem—unknown to the ancient or medieval conscience—is modern. It stems from the social contract dogma of the seventeenth century that attained its full expression in Locke and the French Enlightenment, wherein the theory of revolution received its first doctrinal formulation. As political thought became underlaid with more extensive psychological bases, the issue deepened into the familiar dichotomy: Man against the group, individual against society, citizen against the state. From one fruitful point of view, instanced in the vast field of constitutionalism, all modern political thought may be looked on as concerned with this problem of the interacting responsibility of man and state.

Now with the phenomenon of totalitarianism, the issue is cast in a still more urgent form. The Durkheimian stigmata of the "exteriority" and "constraint" of society are daily more apparent and furnish mounting reason for dismay. More despairing than ever is the question, "What can any of us do against the mass catastrophe that is engulfing us?" Even large-scale group action too often appears futile to mold our seeming destiny of tragedy. An exploitive, reactionary 1942 tax bill survives the widespread protest of one of the largest and most vitally concerned social groups against whose interest the law is enacted—organized labor. Confronted on all hands with the disheartening evidence of such social fatalism, how inconsequential we judge the influence of any single individual on the direction of the institutional life in full growth around him!

In this current context of the disjunction between individual means and social ends, what is the meaning of the obligation of social action? It is our attempt to answer this question in terms which comport (1) with modern psychological theory of personality; and (2) with a positive social ethic.

1. It is in the "symbolic interactionism" of the James-Baldwin-Cooley-Mead thought that we ground our theory of personality, conceiving it as a socially formed rather than an individually given da-

tum. Mead's concept of the social self—"the self arises in conduct"—covers this process by which personality develops in a social context. The oneness of man and society implies more than a structural continuity; it implies also the dynamic relationship of reciprocity. Such functional interdependence, despite all institutional skewness, determines the character of social action as essentially *dynamic rather than pragmatic*. We mean, *social action is a psychological necessity of man, and man's obligation of social action is not limited by the probability of his achieving goals set as the object of such action*. Social action is never repudiable in human life; the problem rather is, what are the kinds of social action possible in a given situation, and what is the particular type of social action needed today to bring collective life into rapport with personal ideals? The title of this paper is not exhortatory; it assumes the indissociable bond between human life and social action and is addressed to an analysis of the implications therein. And this carries the problem beyond a mere psychological truism and invests it with moral value.

2. Social action is always discriminable by moral criteria and hence has value meaning. "Only deliberate action," says Dewey, "is distinctively moral, for only then does there enter the question of better and worse." From our psychological theory of personality, we postulate the social origin of moral action. Ethical conduct is definable only in terms of man's interaction with man. Morally, that is, as well as psychologically, we reject the sheer negativity of social abstinence as an impossibility. By mere denial man cannot avoid the problem which his own action poses. No matter how exteriorly constraining social life may be, it is pervasively charged with human responsibility.

For example, it is common to deny responsibility for the social phenomenon of war exactly as we deny responsibility for the natural phenomenon of the avalanche. All nations conduct war while disclaiming their own responsibility for it. But between war and the avalanche lies the moral distinction: the first is the product of man as truly as is an item of his pictorial or musical art; the second is unstamped with the intervention of personality. Hence the rigidity of man's social fate is purely statistical; that fate could be averted, his future re-shaped simply by a re-direction of his own efforts. And no matter how gigantic the task of such basic reconstruction, no matter how improbable its undertaking, there is no other road to social value-goals.

Our statement that social action is moral action gives no support to either an automaton or absolutist theory of social ethics. Social action is moral in the sense that it is instinct throughout with the moral problem, crying for solution; not in the sense that its moral solution is automatic. That is, morality is a complexion of all social action, not a factorable component of any particular action. Neither is morality authoritarian. Certainly all moral action is relative, but relative to the



self, not to institutional modes. To say that moral judgments can never be ex cathedra pronouncements is not to say that they are simply cultural or institutional rationalizations.

## The Self and the Social

Nor is the concept of the uniqueness of the self, from which moral meaning devolves, incompatible with that of the self as social product. In fact, it is because of the very social nature of the self that it is unique. Atoms and electrons, conceptualized as replicas one of another, lack this uniqueness precisely because they lack the social explanation which we give the self. To regard the self and the social as polar opposites is to become mired in the old dichotomy which no longer has meaning either for psychology or for ethics. The self and the social are implicative in each other, not tautologically, but organically and dynamically.

This much sets the theoretical framework of our question. But at this point we are driven to the crucial level of technique. Once we conceive of social action as necessitous and moral in the connotation we have developed, we are still faced with the query, what concretely does such a conception mean? How can we use this theory of social action in daily life? It is to that procedural phase of the inquiry that we now turn.

## II

In our theory of the primacy of the social self in the social process with the concomitant ubiquity of the moral problem, we conceive of social action as fundamentally requiring direction to the personal, immediate, and contactual level of human relationships. For instance, if "liberty" is a social value; i.e., a desideratum of social action, then meaningful concern for liberty will consist in how it is evaluated and striven for in personal, direct, primary ways; not in the super-personal terms of a Liberty League or a National Watch Circle for the Preservation of People's Rights. It is on the primary, personal plane that opportunity is afforded for multiplying the points of contact between character structure (the moral aspect of personality) and the social process; and such face-to-face interaction of men in active, purposive groups, structures social action with the building blocks of personality. This is the clue to the organizational vitality of a Tammany Hall fifty years ago, however we judge its political program. And the palsied plight of current social action is explainable largely by its loss of this elemental character. From this point of view we itemize some of the weaknesses in social action today, and point to the corrections which our analysis implies:

1. Social action today is paralyzed in the delusion of a "book strength" which becomes but the mass symbol of action, and in increasing removes from the immediacy of personal life, puts all its trust in the inertia of numbers. This generally is a present weakness

of the American labor movement and accounts for the blunting in union action of that radical edge that has sometimes marked it in the past. Reliance on a mass-symbolic base divorces personal value from the social process, and through structural inversion, increasingly emphasizes the static rather than the dynamic aspect of social action. Social action must be reoriented to the level of vital, personal relationship, away from the dead weight of mass organization.

2. Social action today is anti-revolutionary. We have referred to this fact in connection with the labor movement. The radicalization of all American life would be vastly facilitated through the substitution of living-interest groups steeped in personal relationships for those mass-base groups which fill the contemporary scene and exploit a people through the mechanisms of overlordship. For instance, war can be abolished only through the bankruptcy of the current anti-revolutionary symbols of "victory," "national unity" and such disvalues now militating against decent human life. The conscientious objector characteristically is politically impotent because he shears his action of social purpose, but in this one respect his basis for action is sound—his realization that war—this war—will end only when individuals as individuals refuse to participate in it.

3. Social action today is largely frustrate. A tragic commonplace is the manner in which our institutional life abrogates its own purposes. We set up particular devices for the avoidance of war, then find that these very devices become the critical cause of war. We evolve a technology for the production of material goods, then learn that our very technology makes impossible the satisfaction of wants. We name men to office, then see these same men betray the cause for which they were elected. Our ideals are buried in the collapse of the temples we build to enshrine them. This institutional phase of the disharmony between means and ends, this deep antagonism between man's aspirations and the social forms in which they seek expression, is our "institutional fallacy." And that is a dilemma of social action today. Mass, impersonal groups create the means for the direct manipulation and exploitation of their own human material. A familiar phenomenon is the "taking over" of groups and the perversion of social action to ends the opposite of the original intent. Labor unions integrate their membership into a statist war program that is destructive of the very purpose of their existence.

4. Social action today is standardized into conventional patterns, striving for a uniformity of result rather than a complex richness of life. Says the amateur sociologist P. W. Bridgman: "If an act is favorable to the existence of that sort of society which the consensus of opinion at the moment regards as desirable, then the act is moral." Everything that we say here contradicts this view. We hold, instead, with the argument presented by Carl J. Friedrich in his recent provocative book "The New Belief in the Common Man" that social action



in a democratic society must proceed on the assumption of *fundamental* differences of opinion, and the coexistence of fundamentally different social values. Social action must be directed away from stereotype ends to resurgent personal values meaningful in the immediate process of life.

5. Social action today is crippled with the "pragmatic error." We demand that action be "effective" in some sense of quick-solving end result. This concept of social action in narrowly mechanistic terms warps it to a preoccupation with proximate goals. We have insisted that social action be immediate, but we have defined immediate as direct and vital concern with personal values; not proximate in the mere ascription of end values to any attainable objective. *Immediate* is our concept of value emphasis; *proximate*, that of mere contiguity. The American Federation of Labor releases a story of its own union action in which President Green takes pride—the mailing of "protest letters" to every member of Congress on certain labor board action. The assumption was that the Federation had thereby discharged its obligation in the matter. But social action in the context we have developed it cannot place its aim and end in such score-board registering of proximate result. Social action must be less concerned with what it "gets done" in a day-by-day sense, and must become more concerned with the encompassment of ultimate goals that are themselves never separate from the process of their realization.

In summary, we view social action in a psychodynamic sense which we seek to square with a scientific understanding of personality, and in its character as an aspect of all human life, we find its moral meaning. We stress that social action as an agency of personality must be directed to the concrete nexus of daily life, and in that service must act as a ceaseless challenge to our institutional forms. Our social world is the projection of self, not as the solipsism of a sterile metaphysic, but in an interactional, dynamic way. To change the world, man must change himself. That is always a needed caution but it is an empty one until specified procedurally within the possibilities of behavior patterns. Personality is the limiting value of social action, and social action must lie in the locus of personality and operate through character structure.

# WORKERS IDEOLOGY UNDER FASCISM

by Louis Clair

The complete atomization of the European working class and the destruction of all its organizations seem to have thrown it back to the level of its early beginnings. Indeed, certain embryonic forms of organization which tend to appear out of the new conditions created by the iron rule of the totalitarian state, such as the institution of "illegal representatives" formed spontaneously on the factory level without interference from outside political trends or ideologies, seem to confirm this still more. The "illegal representative," chosen primarily from among his co-workers (not by ballots but through a kind of unofficial spontaneous choice) because they trust his judgment and his general moral attitude rather than for any particular political beliefs, reminds one strongly of the beginnings of the Chartist movement and is only meagerly analogous to the working class organizations of later times.

And yet, the conditions of life in totalitarian society have had far-reaching repercussions on the workers' ideological framework. I believe that many of these results are, to a large extent, progressive and encouraging. Many have lately come to realize that the economic development under totalitarian rule has cast up a host of new phenomena which cannot simply be classified under the convenient term "monopoly capitalism." But much less attention has been paid to the changes which have correspondingly taken place in the sphere of human consciousness.

In the liberal phase of capitalism there remained an apparent distinction between the economic and political spheres of society. Their ultimate unity was hidden by many ideological veils. While a consciousness of the economic antagonism between employer and employee was rather easily attained once capitalism had developed, the intricacies of the political structure of society were hidden for the great mass of the workers. It remained impossible for the revolutionary vanguard to penetrate the ranks of labor with its insight into the real class character of the state.

Under totalitarian domination, reality itself has provided the needed educator. Politics has now invaded the whole of society. It is no longer possible to separate the employer-employee relation from the subject-state relation; they tend to merge into one at an ever increasing rate. Under totalitarianism even the illusion of autonomous and separate departments of society can no longer be retained. The Nazi *Frankfurter Zeitung* recently stated: "The war economy has increasingly put into the background the private character of the enterprise." This development is reflected at every moment and in all spheres of life.

The average worker now tends to realize that a purely economic struggle has become meaningless because (1) every attempt to fight



with economic weapons, such as the strike, will be opposed by the full might of the totalitarian state, which will regard every "economic" struggle—however unimportant—as an attack against its claim to dominate the whole of society; and (2) the employer himself is not in a position to decide on issues in his factory. A strike against an individual employer can therefore attain no purpose.

With this new development, class relations have become much clearer. Intermediate links which earlier obscured basic antagonism have disappeared.

With the disappearance of the "free" markets and the fetishes of the commodity-producing society, there have also vanished those ideological screens suited only to such a society. Under the totalitarian yoke, where the whole economy is directed according to the plan of the ruling elite, there is no "natural law of supply and demand" to obscure the issues. Nor is there any parliamentary fiction. Relations between rulers and ruled have assumed an open and undisguised character and they resemble much more the open master-serf relation of the middle ages than the complicated contractual relations which prevailed in the liberal era. The command of the leader is much more palpable a thing than are the mysteries of the world market. Stripped of its mythical character, the state can no longer assume an air of presumptive neutrality on basic class issues. It has become *the* exploiter.

Although Lenin's theory that the consciousness of the workers can reach only the trade union level through their own experience may contain a certain element of truth for the "classical" period of capitalism, it is undeniable that the workers have become "state conscious" under totalitarianism. Shaped in the school of years of fascist domination, the workers have learned to realize that what really matters is the political power of the state; that the real fight to be put up will not principally be directed against one or another individual employer, but against the machinery of the total state, with its army, its Gestapo, its economic planning commissions. Society becomes politicized, and in the course of this process the consciousness of the workers changes from a trade unionist to a political one.

In Germany at least, the Nazis have advanced the mechanization of society to an amazing degree; but they have at the same time made skilled workers out of large masses of unskilled or perpetually unemployed. While it is true that skill in itself does not provide any clue to political consciousness, it is nevertheless its fundamental condition. Skill is accompanied by a wider horizon, a stronger feeling of self-respect and self-confidence. The unemployed and the unskilled have a tendency to rely on outside direction. It is much easier for the skilled worker to find a center in himself, in his own ability and value.

An awareness of the character of the state is a positive achievement per se. But for a new political conception it is necessary to gain the understanding that nothing is achieved through a mere change in the personnel of the state machine; the realization is needed that regi-

mentation in any form, imposed by an outside uncontrolled agency or apparatus, is to be opposed. Here we move on much less sure ground, for we know too little of what is going on in totalitarian countries to make any definite claims. Yet every indication and report we have been receiving has stressed the fact that workers are much more concerned about the lack of elementary liberties than about their material situation. As a German soldier, a metal worker in civilian life, put it to a friend of mine: "We have more radio sets and better holiday facilities under Hitler than we had before, but this is not what we are concerned about; it is the fact we never have the opportunity to do or say what we please." The urge for personal liberty is widespread and it is coupled with a hatred for any commands from "above." At least a large section of the working class will therefore be repulsed by any Stalinist version of a "socialist revolution."

This section of the European workers is trying to come to grips with the same problems socialists here are attempting to cope with: How can a socialist society be organized on a democratic basis without the oppressively dominating interference of a bureaucratic state or party machine? Of course, they do not have the same means of theoretical investigation which we enjoy here, nor do they have the chance to discuss these ideas in larger groups. But they have the daily living experience of the working of the apparatus, they live to see how it degrades men, how it makes them powerless, automaton cogs in a machine which needlessly revolves. They have learned that such simple human values as friendship and solidarity generate forces of resistance which prove to be more effective than any party program; they realize that human values are the only things which count and which can be purposefully opposed to an inhuman society. They will therefore be largely immune to the kind of political thinking still so powerful here—the illusion that the elimination of fetters on production through the action of a centralized state bureaucracy will in itself advance society or the cause of liberty.

The European working class has had a long socialist tradition. Whereas the American worker largely lacks any vision of socialism, this prospect was a part of the world view of the Western European worker. Much of it has undoubtedly been lost; nevertheless, a great number are thinking along socialist lines at the same time as they attempt to redefine socialism, endeavoring humbly and obscurely to discover a new meaning for the old words, rejecting certain parts and giving a new sense to others.

The idea of the workers' councils, already discussed by the most advanced among them, will be the center of the social thinking of these workers tomorrow. This idea flows almost automatically from the orientation their thoughts must take as an answer to their questions on the nature of democratic socialism. The factory is the unit around which all their thinking must revolve at present, for there is no larger national organization, no link uniting workers of different occupations. The atomization of the workers has a logic of its own in this sphere,



thrusting their thinking toward the smallest unit of social life which exists for them as workers: their comrades of the same factory or, perhaps, of the same shop unit.

The workers have learned to value the competence and reliability of those working by their sides above the commands of a mass party. They will weigh personal responsibility as against the irresponsible apparatus. Knowing their fellow-workers, aware of their technical and other capabilities, their tendency will be to rely above all on activity in the small social unit the factory constitutes.

At the same time, however, these workingmen will think of the necessary coordination of those small sectors. Having had the experience of the large-scale organizational ability of the oppressor state, they will think of effective means to parry its strength without building up a new machine; and the idea of councils, first locally coordinated, then in wider units, will embrace ever larger sections.

There is little use in pretending that the workers of Europe have already reached a clear consciousness of these issues on a mass scale. There also can exist, at the same time, a tendency to establish an anti-fascist regime by fascist means. However, among the best there is a realization of these issues, however dim or vague its forms. But while in the abortive attempts of the years after the first world war the great cause for the defeats was to be found in the wide gap between the consciousness of the small vanguard and the broad masses, there is a probability that, for the reasons briefly outlined above, a realization of these issues will much more readily penetrate in the coming period. The events of recent years, which have shattered so many illusions, have also torn down the ideological barriers which formerly prevented access to a new movement, giving to many the possibility of acquiring insights which previously had necessarily remained the privilege of a very few.

These events do not by themselves bear a guarantee of victory for a democratic socialist revolution in Europe. Revolutions are not made by those who demand certainty of victory before they act; but there are many elements, born of totalitarian society itself, which strengthen the chance of a favorable outcome for such a revolution.

*Conditions in Europe today remind one strangely of a prediction made by Marx ninety years ago: "The outcome of the struggle would appear to be that all classes alike, impotent and mute, have fallen on their knees before the threatening cudgel. None the less, the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still on its way through purgatory. It does its work methodically . . . First of all it perfects parliamentary authority for the purpose of overthrowing it. Having fulfilled this aim, it goes on to perfect executive authority, reducing that authority to the quintessential expression, isolating that authority as the whole object of attack in order to mass the revolutionary forces of destruction for the onslaught. When the second half of the preliminary work has been completed, Europe will leap to her feet and exclaim: "Old mole! Canst work ' the earth so fast? A worthy pioneer!"*

## **RADICALS AND THE PACIFIST ETHIC**

**by Mulford Sibley**

In the course of twentieth-century politics nothing is more remarkable than the deliquescence of radicalism since the beginning of the first World War. It has either assumed power and been corrupted or emasculated, as in Great Britain and Germany; or gained the upper hand, only to be overthrown by the military force of a brutal opponent, as in Spain, and, in a measure, in Austria; or suffered a severe decline in popular support, as in the United States. It is not without reason that many have come to look upon modern radicalism as weak and anemic—bereft alike of speculative power and of the means for effective action in the realm of practical politics.

Accepting this general observation as essentially correct, what is the explanation? How explain, for example, the failure of the once magnificent German socialist movement or the collapse of the once bright star of Spanish republicanism? There have been many analyses, and no one of them can be said to be entirely satisfactory. While the answer set forth here is not novel, and certainly not all-embracing, it has received all too little emphasis among radicals themselves.

The Decline of Radicalism in the West—as one might well call it—is due, I suggest, to the fact that it long ago ceased to be radical at what Lenin would have called the vital point—that of strategy or technique or method. In its analysis of the existing order it has been singularly acute, but has failed to discern the full implications of its own prognosis for a theory of revolution. In so failing, it has allowed the initiative to remain in the hands of the proponents of the existing order. Radicalism, itself is thus forced to remain on the defensive, while its wise opponents corrupt it or blast it to pieces with their own notorious technique.

Broadly speaking, the opponents of the existing order of things have pointed out clearly the class and exploitative nature of contemporary society. They have declared with great insight that history thus far can be read to a large degree in terms of class struggle, the dominant group always ruling by force and tending to impose its own thought patterns upon the whole society by violence. Society has become increasingly an engine for war, because its class and exploitative structure, unable to utilize the energies of men and resources for construction must, for fear of its own demolition, utilize them for destruction. That the modern State is built primarily for violence, that all its machinery is subservient to this one central purpose, and that this violence is two-fold—a war of ruling class against the ruled and wars instigated by national ruling classes against one another, in which



the vast mass of mankind are their dupes—these statements remain the keynote of all authentic radicalism. Its object is to overthrow a system whose central theme is exploitation of the many by the few and whose method is violence.

Where, then, has modern radicalism fallen short? In terms of theory, the answer is that it has never seen clearly the relationship between its end—the destruction of the present order—and the necessary means which that end dictates. It has not seen distinctly, for the last generation at least, that the weakest point of the present order is the violence whereby it seeks to, and does, sustain itself. If the revolutionist is ever to gain the initiative in his struggle with the existing order of things, the most likely beginning is a rigid refusal to use a method so intimately and inextricably bound up with the present exploitative order.

### **The Use of Violence**

Now radicalism has not seen this at all clearly—and in some cases has repudiated it directly. There are passages in Engels which both implicitly and explicitly aver that violence by the exploited will hasten the overthrow of the present order. In the Russian Revolution, Maxim Gorky told Emma Goldman (*Living My Life*, 744), the revolutionists were “forced” by their enemies to use Cheka, prison, terror, and death. Trotsky offered a similar defense when he replied to middle class critics of the “revolutionary” terror: “Whether this method is good or bad from the point of view of normative philosophy, I do not know and I must confess I am not interested in knowing. But I do know definitely that this is the only way that humanity has found thus far.” (*My Life*, 474). And Lenin agreed: “The substitution of a proletarian for the capitalist State is impossible without a violent revolution....” (*The State and Revolution*, 129).

In the ranks of non-Communists, while statements of the problem have been rather ambiguous at times, repudiations of violence on principle have but rarely appeared. But even where in words there is discernible a skepticism regarding the usefulness of violence in revolution, actions in politics for the most part belie the words. The Social Democratic Party in Germany refused to vote war credits up to 1914, but then most of its deputies gave way and harnessed themselves to the war machine, which killed them for any genuine revolution. The same was true of the British Labor Party and the French Socialists in that war—with honorable exceptions in both cases; and while the bulk of the American Socialist Party withheld its political approval in 1917, the Party was by no means united. In the post-war epoch, radicals almost universally applauded the violent resistance of the Vienna workers to the Dollfuss regime and were enthusiastic in their collaboration with the violent tactics of the Spanish republican government. As for the second World War, there has been less organized opposition within radical ranks to the war efforts of the piratical ruling classes than in the first global conflict. Indeed, many erstwhile radi-

cals have seen fit to give their utmost energy and time to the support of the violence by which the ruling class seeks to perpetuate its power, on the specious theory that one national ruling class is so much better than another that violence of the former against the latter ought to be sustained by true revolutionists.

## Violence and Ideals

Now this confirms the picture of confusion in radical ranks. Often it is perceived quite clearly—what it is the purpose of this essay to uphold—that the utilization of violence, whatever the intentions of the users may be, generates ends which will always constitute frustrations of radical ideals. Many penetrating attacks based upon this contention have been directed against the power-holding group in the Soviet Union, for example. Works like those of Boris Souverine and others, it has been pointed out by many radicals, demonstrate the close positive connection between the revolutionary terrorism used and supported by Lenin himself and the tyranny and bureaucracy which have characterized Stalin's regime. But the same individuals who thus acutely criticize the Stalinite orgy of power will often applaud the violence of the Vienna workers in 1934 or of the Spanish Republic or even the "total war" being waged by "democratic" against "totalitarian" States. Non-violence has not been a principle of most radical movements—in a pinch, almost all repudiate it.

In so doing, they eventually become one with the ruling class, not only in the method—violence—but in the end which they seek. The German Social Democratic Party had enchained itself to the State engine of violence long before a new Master of the State gave the party of Wilhelm Liebknecht the *coup de grace*. The Social Democratic Party voted for its own death when it supported war credits in 1914 and allowed its members to be conscripted for military training. Likewise, the British Labor Party, by failing to dissociate itself from the method of its imperial rulers, signs the death warrant for its own professed ideals, however much it may apologize and however powerful may be its Laskis and Bevins. By sustaining the violent crusade of the Churchills and Amerys, even though it believes it is averting a greater evil by so doing, its leaders take on the masks of the rulers in whose methods they are acquiescing. The Party becomes a police arm of the ruling class; and it recasts its theories into an ideology approaching that of the exploiting group itself.

Violence—however rationalized—is thus essentially reactionary in every event. It can never be ethically neutral, despite the assertion of Max Lerner to the contrary (*Ideas for the Ice Age*, 40). Always it encourages that will to power which uses ideals as its errand-boys. The original end is engulfed by the means, which sets up its own end—power, divorced from other values. As the Dutch anarchist, Barthelémy de Ligt, has pointed out, it is the contemporary ruling class, carrying on the tradition of its predecessors, which has "spread the romantic ideology of violence right down to the lowest strata of the



the corruption inherent in "throwing gas and incendiary bombs on defenceless crowds, women, children, sick people, animals." And he adds middleclasses and proletariat" by means of military conscription and that to the ruling class, "the use of this violence comes naturally." Radicals, however, "are battling for a world from which every form of brutal violence will be banished. That is why, when once the old means of violence are used by them there appears a flagrant contradiction between such means and the goal in sight." (*The Conquest of Violence*, 71-72).

## Pacifism as Principle

If this argument be valid, then any movement whose principles countenance violence or whose members participate in or sanction violence or war, whatsoever the alleged reason might be, can hardly stand in the radical tradition. A genuinely radical movement—one which literally gets down to the roots of things—must be fully pacifist as a matter of principle. The full connotations of pacifism for practical politics I am not prepared to state here—indeed, one of the most difficult tasks before a radical movement would be to state those implications completely in their relation to the general theoretical problem. But the principle of outright and brazen pacifism must be placed alongside public ownership of instrumentalities of production and democratic control as the third of a great trinity without which any genuine revolution is impossible. If it is a question either of gaining power or of holding power once it is attained—as in Spain—the means must be conformable to the pacifist ethic. Those means may involve civil disobedience, non-cooperation, voluntary mass suffering by those trained to undergo the hardship—and this training might become one of the prime functions of a renovated radical movement itself—or any of a number of other techniques.

It may be maintained that many radicals have taken substantially this position already, and that the plea of this essay is simply that their number be increased. But this semi-objection misses the point. In the first place, very few in the socialist or allied movements have assumed a doctrine of non-violence as a matter of principle—there was very little criticism of violence *per se* in the Spanish Civil War, for example. But even more important, in the second place, is the argument that we need not only a greater aggregate of *individual* pacifist resolutions, but, more primarily, that only by the *corporate* adoption of the principle of pacifism will it be possible to infuse new life into radicalism in general and make it politically effective. It is, and has been for years, sadly in need of a dynamic which will set it apart as a definitely revolutionary force—distinguish it, for example, from vaguely "progressive" philosophies of action on the one hand, and, on the other, from approaches which, while born in the revolutionary fervor of former years, and still proclaiming revolutionary qualities, have, as a result partly of their corruption through the utilization of violence, become patently reactionary.

The emergence of an even more brutal State from the holocaust of this second great war makes the union of economic and political radicalism with pacifism even more imperative. Socialists and other radicals—for example, Pandit Nehru—have too often refused to see the pacifist ethic as a principle, but have constantly viewed it as a matter of expediency, to be discarded when violence appears to be “imperative” for the attainment of the end. The difficulty about this position is that every emergent situation tends in and of itself to determine, in the form of its dominant forces, the minds of those caught within its meshes, and unless those minds are imbued with a sharply defined philosophy of non-violence as a principle of action in the world of modern politics, they will succumb in almost every instance to the ruling classes and their traditional technique. The height of wisdom is to build the radicalism of the future—a very difficult future—upon the solid foundation of an unconditional renunciation of all violence. Only by so doing, whatever the sacrifice, can a clear break with the past be initiated; and in that sharp disengagement will be seen the true lineaments of—Revolution.

This note is not intended as a special dissociation of ENQUIRY from Mr. Sibley's espousal of pacifism. It is intended as a re-statement of the magazine's policy: broad and open discussion within the framework of general agreement on the goals of democratic endeavor and the revolutionary willingness to fight for them. It is clear then that Mr. Sibley's ideas are completely welcome in the pages of ENQUIRY.

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## The Question of Power

In an article, "The Dilemma of Social Idealism," which appeared in the November 1942 issue of ENQUIRY, I suggested that the fundamental basis for political action today must be a persistent and permanent struggle, carried on from below, for the achievement of concrete democratic gains. The question has been raised of the place of the conquest of state power as a political objective within such an orientation; the following comments may be of value in that connection.

The question of power is the subject-matter of politics. It is the touchstone which divides us into separate tendencies, which sets one group off against another even when there seems to be agreement on the goals of action. For the problem of power is bound up with the *means* we choose, with what we *do*. Those who deal only with what ought to be, with picturing the kind of society they would *like* to see, play the role of preachers (not an inestimable role in itself); but they do not deal in the commerce of politics, which has to do with action and the consequence of action — all in the context of existing and possible power relations.

It has been a fallacy common to the practice of both the revolutionary and reformist movements, to associate power exclusively with the state and formal governing bodies. This is true of the Leninists only in a special sense, for they have elaborated a careful and consistent program for the achievement of state power which is sufficiently realistic to understand the necessity of undermining the power of the social system on which that state rests. But what is important here is the fact that their primary orientation — the goal which shapes their strategy and tactics — is the capture and maintenance of state power. And they have limited their field of vision so drastically that they have been unable to see the evil consequences for democracy which result from using the state as the primary means of social transformation. The liberals, on the other hand, have fixed their attention, too, on the state. They are enamoured of the seats of power. They are delighted to be able to identify themselves with important, above all officially influential, social trends. Thus they approved of the realist Stalin, and have felt happily practical in their association with the New Deal. And if offered posts in the government, then truly their cups are overflowing. That is why their attention is centered on Washington. In their own way, they too have focussed their whole social program around the question of the state apparatus.

The same pattern can be observed in the trade union movement: both the Leninist revolutionary and the reformist are interested primarily, each in his own way, in control over the apparatus. Here again the Leninist recognizes the practical necessity for influence among the rank and file in the interests of attaining a secure control, while the reformist limits himself almost entirely to maneuver and adjustment to the bureaucratic leaders in the interest of temporary gains, which are reflected in the achievement of posts and the ease of operation which comes with being able to identify oneself with the dominant group.

Yet it must be recognized that power, the ability to deploy forces, to control the channels of opinion and the means of armed coercion and defense, may accrue to other forces in society than the state. The social rule of American business rests on its control over the key institutions of society: the industrial organization, the channels of communication, the schools. Take a cross-section of any town in America and you will find, as everyone knows, that the major institutions react to the needs and desires of the business community. This rule is *reinforced* by control of the state (Army, Navy, State and Justice Depts., and the War Production Board), but it is *guaranteed* by *social* power, not by state power. The significance of the trade union movement is precisely that it strikes at the power of the capitalists within the industrial structure, the major font of social power.

Those who want to put democracy first must fight for it and defend it within the institutions of society. This is a *permanent necessity* and has a wider importance than the struggle against capitalism. Today, the fight must be concentrated not only against economic plutocracy but also against the bureaucratic state (whether you call it "workers" or "capitalist" or "fascist") which is extending its control over society. What is required is the creation of centers of strength outside and independent of state apparatus, in order to avoid the concentration of social power in the hands of a new social force, the totalitarian state. This must be accompanied by a struggle to denude the state of its power, which involves the creation of anti-state sentiment, a fight against centralization of power, for a shift in the control of armed strength, and so on. Since the social power of the mass lies only in organization, the shift in the center of power in society must be to the organized popular mass movements. The task of a consistent radicalism is to participate in that struggle, perhaps even to direct it for short periods, but mostly to influence it by the education of the ranks in the mass movement and by means of militant pressure on the leadership.

Now much as one might wish it were otherwise, it is a fact that no one can propose a broad social program and avoid facing the issue of state power. It is true that any participation in a struggle for state power must be marked up to the account of political risk, but it is a risk which must be taken. We cannot be for all the things which lead to state power (as the cumulative struggle for concrete democratic gains inexorably does) and then abruptly wash our hands of the matter. The importance of the state as an institution is too great to permit any serious political action — even that restricted to the economic sphere—to be carried on without vital consequences for the problem of state power. Yet it is becoming ever more clear that there are grave difficulties involved in the attempt to maintain both mass power and democratic methods. As an answer to this dilemma, the principle proposed here is this: *where democracy and governing power clash, the latter must be relinquished.*

One may justifiably retort: easily said, but in politics too "wishing doesn't make it so." That is true. But what I want to suggest is that an organized social movement, with an ideology and tradition integrating that principle into the fabric of its social structure, may prove effective where wishes fail. First let me point to an example and an analogy to make this program clear.

1. The Bolsheviks, in 1917, were convinced that the power in Russia had to be seized and *held*. This was the cornerstone of Lenin's politics. It followed quite naturally from this that if the maintenance of state power required the institution of undemocratic procedures, then that bitter conclusion had to be accepted. Now it may well be that nothing could have changed the eventual outcome of the revolution; I am concerned, however, with the question of what differences in policy — a question which is subject to control — might have changed its course. Along that line I suggest that the best program would have been one of abandoning the state power when maintaining it meant the abrogation of democracy. This would not have meant political abdication. It would have involved a retreat to the defense and extension of those political, economic and military organizations outside the state which remained revolutionary in their political allegiance, and which constituted the basis of their *social* power. They would then have been able to continue the fight for their program without abandoning their interest in democracy. It is possible, though doubtful in the circumstances, that that would have meant the accession of Kornilov to power with the institution of a military dictatorship. But it may be stated (1) that control of the state does not decide everything if there are organizations which, through a policy of armed defense and militant opposition, will make a regime untenable; and (2) it is better to take the risk of going down fighting in defense of concrete democratic gains than for a party to transform itself into an authoritarian regime in the interests of some "future" or "higher" democratic goals. There is much wisdom in the remark of John Dewey that "when freedom is conceived to be transcendental, the



coercive restraint of immediate necessity will lay its harsh hand upon the mass of men."

2. The work of militant progressives in trade unions presents closely analogous problems. In building a union, and from time to time in the course of proposing policies for its operation, it may become necessary to assume leadership in the sense of becoming the governing body of the union as a whole. But if we know in advance that we can expect the maintenance of power to clash with democratic goals, preparation can be made for a retreat to an organized opposition faction, exerting pressure from outside the administration. This again is not abdication; it is the substitution of an organized, continuous struggle from below for a reliance on bureaucratic measures. *It is a reliance on the social power of the organized ranks.*

But how can this be achieved? How will it be possible for leaders to abandon governing power? It can be accomplished, I think, through the strength of a social force which has proven its effectiveness in recent decades: the ideology and tradition of a well-organized political movement. A party which is vitally concerned over the question of program, which builds an intense consciousness of political responsibility and the importance of thinking things through, can maintain the adherence of its people to its basic program. For example, in a movement with the point of view presented here, the assumption of power in a union would not necessarily be met with exultation; the members would be so educated that this would become an occasion for searching and skeptical inquiry as to whether it had been possible of accomplishment without the sacrifice of basic program. It will be readily granted that this would be a different reaction from that which has obtained in the socialist and communist parties of the past.

In a truly democratic organization, no leadership could contravene its traditions with impunity. Freedom of factional organization and the temper of free inquiry would not allow it. I am not saying that we must depend on the pristine idealism of the individuals involved. The force to which I refer is *social*: it involves organized groups, sentiments, habits, and an alert public opinion. That is where its power lies. It should be remembered that it was precisely such a social force which was a powerful influence on the Bolsheviks: it built and sustained the notion that it was important to seize state power, to maintain it, and later to bow to the authority of the central leadership.

PHILIP SELZNICK.

## THE PHILOSOPHER AS PROPHET\*

William Ferry, in his review of Si-lone last month, remarked that politics was well on the way to being formulated in religious terms. Charles Morris' *Paths of Life* — a characterization of the contemporary crisis by an American pragmatist — is further evidence of this current intellectual trend. Those who know Morris only as a professional philosopher, as the author of *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* for the *Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, or as the expositor of George H. Mead, may find the book something of a shock.

Morris' approach to — religion and to politics — is along the path of personality. He distinguishes three components of personality: the dionysian, the promethean, the buddhistic. The dionysian component tends to satisfy existing desires on an impulse level, the promethean to obtain the maximum realization of desire through a modification of the world, the buddhistic to avoid frustration through the restraint of desire. Every individual is characterized by the order of dominance of these three components, and for each hierarchy of traits a problem of personality organization is posed.

There are seven possible combina-

\* *Paths of Life* by Charles Morris. Harper and Brothers. \$3.

tions of these three components: six when they vary in strength and one when all are equal in strength. Each combination has its own way of life or religion, which is its formula for interpreting experience so as to obtain a satisfying integrated expression of the three components of personality in accordance with their relative importance. It is to be expected that among the religious Morris selects as representative of each combination are systems of thought not ordinarily viewed as religion, for he is concerned with religion, not as a social institution, but as personality orientation. The seven characteristic paths of life are dissected: "The Buddhist path of detachment from desire, the dionysian path of abandonment to primitive impulses (Nietzsche), the Promethean path of creative reconstruction (Dewey), the Appollonian path of rational moderation (Aristotle), the Christian path of sympathetic love, the Mohammedan path of the "holy war," and the Maitreyan path of generalized detached-attachment. The last, which is the expression of that personality in which the three components are equally balanced, is as a religion only potential, for it has to be embodied in a prophet and a philosophy. It is the Maitreyan attitude toward experience which Morris honors as the basis of the new personality and the new religion.

The book might be merely a very competent discussion of various systems of thought from a special point of view, and a sensitive expression of the intellectual's exclusion from social creation, if Morris did not also use his personality schema to explain political events. The present war is a conflict between Mohammedan and Promethean man; the class struggle a struggle of non-ruling personality types for dominance, history the accession and recession of personality types with power passing cyclically from one to the other. Societal tension is traced to the failure of submerged personality configuration to find adequate expression and to the inherent inability, due to one-sidedness, of any one personality type to

cope with all the demands of social organization. This facility of analysis is possible to Morris because of an initial, and unwarranted, reduction: "Since social groups are composed of individuals, the pattern of a society can only be the pattern of the types of personality of its members."

In spite of his exotic categories and political irresponsibility, Morris' book has some interest for those concerned with the role of personality in social action. Every organized political movement molds the personality of its membership; membership attitudes are an important political tool, and the seriousness with which a political party regards particular policies or procedures can be judged by whether or not it actively prepares its members, psychologically, for their implementation. Progressive politics interested in both devotion to an end *and* a critical attitude toward its own activity has a difficult task posed: to foster attitudes of intransigence with one hand and attitudes of detachment with the other. In short, the problem of science in the affective arena of social action is the problem of the Maitreyan man: "To be both in and out of the game, and watching and wondering at it."

Morris' ideal personality is a personal solution in a social crisis; his plea is, quite literally, for the well-rounded personality. But in a larger sense, his ideal of detached-attachment is more than an ideal conceived in personal terms and guided by a sense of esthetic unity and fitness. It formalizes into a personality type the twin conditions of worthwhile political action: a devotion to an end and an attention to the facts, concrete or theoretical, present or future. Without attachment, politics is opportunism; without detachment, it is everlasting frustration. But unless these twin conditions are progressively objectified in societal procedures, so that we may have more to rely upon than evanescent good will, their fulfillment is either a pious hope or intellectual demagoguery.

GERTRUDE JAEGER.